

GEOG 306

Geography of Latin America and the Caribbean



Clockwise from upper left:
Brazil Deforestation
Santiago, Chile
Placencia, Belize
Machu Picchu

Course Syllabus

Geography Program
Winthrop University
Fall 2013

Instructor Information

Instructor: Bryan McFadden
Office Hours: M 8:30-11:30 am | T 1:30-4:00 pm
W 2:00 am – 4:00 pm | F 1:00 pm-4:00 pm
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Geography Program Homepage:

<http://www.winthrop.edu/geography/>

Course Information

Course: GEOG 306-001 (12256) – Geography of Latin America and the Caribbean
Lectures: WF 11:00-12:15
Location: OWEN 202
Credit Hours: 3

Course Description and Philosophy

Geographers are concerned with the “who”, “what”, “where”, “why”, “when”, and “how” of humans their interrelationships and their relationship to the environment:

1. Who is doing what?
2. What is going on?
3. Where is it happening?
4. Why is it occurring there?
5. When did it happen? When is it going to happen?
6. How is it going to happen? How did it happen?

The course focuses on the spatial aspects of population growth and distribution, cultural differentiation, urban growth and decline, the spread of ideas and innovations, regional development, and the location of economic activity, as well as problems associated with these processes. In addition to the human geographic aspects, this course will also study the physical geography of the region and how these varied environments impact the people that live there.

Latin America and the Caribbean (Middle and South America) is one of the earth’s most important and rapidly changing cultural realms. Their lands and peoples, regrettably, are also among the least understood. Misconceptions of Latin America and the Caribbean abound. In this course, we will take a brief tour of Latin America and the Caribbean. We will explore the unique physical, historical, cultural, political, and economic patterns, from both systematic and regional approaches. We will learn about the unique environments, cultures and economic patterns in different regions and countries.

Course Goals and Objectives

Geography by its nature examines, from a spatial perspective, the diversity and range of the physical and human systems across the planet. Consequently it complements the goals as outline in the general education curriculum, specifically goal number four:

“To recognize and appreciate human diversity (both past and present) as well as the diversity of ideas,”

To achieve this goal, students will:

1. Analyze Latin American culture, societies, languages, historical periods and artistic expressions.
2. Understand Latin America cultures, economies, politics and geography.
3. Understand the nature and role Latin American plays within the global environment.

This course participates in the Global Learning Initiative. The global learning components of this course are the following:

1. To provide a systematic study of Latin America including the following the sub-topics
 - a. The nature and perspective on geography as it relates to Latin America
 - b. Population and cultural patterns and processes
 - c. The political organization of space
 - d. Agriculture and Rural life
 - e. Industrialization and the economy
 - f. Cities and Urban Life
2. To teach the use of spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine the human organization of space within Latin America.
3. To teach the use and interpretation of maps, spatial data sets and geographic models when analyzing human diversity.
4. To teach spatial relationships across different scales ranging from the global to the local.

Lastly, these four objectives combine to produce the overall goal of the course:

“To instill within the student a geographic perspective with which to view the landscape and understand current events with an awareness of the potential relationships that exist between divergent places.”

Student Learning Outcomes

This course participates in the Global Learning Initiative (GLI). Geography by its nature is holistic in its approach to real-world problems. Consequently by the end of the semester students should be able to:

- Discuss and describe the major concepts regions of Latin America in terms of its place, space, scale, landscape, etc.
- Distinguish the characteristics and key principles of Latin American society
- Understand the role Latin America plays within the greater global system
- Understand that Latin America is an entity that is ecologically, economically, and politically interconnected and interdependent and what the implications are of this for problem solving within the global context.
- Appreciate that the diversity of cultural backgrounds and personal experiences influence the way people perceive places and how those experiences particular to Latin America define who they are as a people.
- Approach problem-solving from a geography perspective by understanding the role location plays.

Course Materials

Textbook

There is no text book for this course. All materials provided to students will be available through the course website.

Course Website

Blackboard is used for this course. All lectures and assignments are posted on Blackboard. If you need assistance with Blackboard, below is a link that has various instructions and troubleshooting guides:

http://www2.winthrop.edu/webct/Blackboard_Training_Tutorials.html

<https://bb-winthrop.blackboard.com/>

Course Requirements

Assignments

You will be required to produce two current event assignments. For each submission students will research and identify an article covering a current event of relevance. Each student will present the details of the article and lead a discussion. The dates included reflect when the assignment is due. Each assignment is worth **10%** of your final grade. The combined value of the assignments is **20%** of your final grade.

Current Event Presentations

CE#1 - September 18, 20, 25, 27
CE#2 - October 23, 25

Research Project

There will be one assignment in the form of a research project on a topic of your choosing. The assignment is worth a total of **20%** of your final grade.

Component	Due Date	Value
Project Proposal	Sept 20, 2013	5%
Presentations	Nov 6 - 15	25%

Midterm exam

The midterm exam is worth **20%** of your final grade

Wednesday October 02, 2013

Final Exam

There will be a cumulative exam based on all material (videos, lectures, website materials, etc.) presented in the course. The final exam is worth **20%** of your final grade.

Monday December 09, 2013 11:30 AM

Participation

During lectures, many questions will be asked about the content of the materials being covered. This class will also have a significant number of topics for discussion. While I will not randomly call on somebody and “put them on the spot” participation in class discussion is encouraged and expected. Class participation is worth **10%** of your final grade.

Course Rules and Guidelines

Special Needs: Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and require specific accommodations to complete this course, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 803-323-3290. Once you have your official notice of accommodations from the Office of Disability Services, please inform me as early as possible in the semester.

If you have questions about accessibility statements or other accommodation issues, please contact ODS. Information about services and accommodations is also available on the ODS website: <http://www.winthrop.edu/disabilities/>.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be checked randomly throughout the term. Those students missing more than 5 classes will receive an F. Any extenuating circumstance that may prevent a student from attending class needs to be discussed with the professor the moment they arise. Please see the undergraduate catalog for the University Attendance Policies (http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/recandreg/Catalogs/11-12/2011_12_UG_Catalog.pdf)

Student Code of Conduct: As noted in the Student Conduct Code: "Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as adult individuals." The policy on student academic misconduct is outlined in the "Student Conduct Code Academic Misconduct Policy" in the Student Handbook (www.winthrop.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/).

Safe Zones Statement: The professor considers this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being – regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thoughts is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

Classroom Etiquette: All cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned **OFF** (not on silent mode or vibrate). The use of computers without prior approval is forbidden. Students texting in class will be asked to leave and will be considered absent. A second offense will result in a 10% reduction in your **FINAL** grade. A third offense will result in an **F** in the course. If you are expecting an important phone call you are to notify me during the beginning of the class. If you wish to record the lecture you must consult with the professor prior to recording any lectures. For the full policy please see the College of Arts and Sciences policy at the following link.
<http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/artscience/AppropriateUseOfHandHeldWirelessTechnologyApprovedPolicyMar2010.pdf>

If a test or exam is scheduled for a particular class, students will not be permitted to take the test/exam when 15 minutes has expired since the start of the test/exam session. A grade of zero will be entered and the lateness will be treated as an absence.

Assignment Submission: All assignments will be handed in directly to the instructor at the beginning of the class on which it is due. Any assignment handed in after that time will be assigned late penalties accordingly. If a student cannot hand in an assignment directly to the instructor, prior arrangements should be made accordingly. Assignments found under my door will NOT be accepted. It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive your assignment. E-Mail submissions will NOT be accepted unless pre-arranged with the instructor prior to the assignment due date

Students may be required to submit an electronic version of their assignment upon request, please retain electronic versions of all assignments until they are returned to you.

Late Penalties: **No late assignments will be accepted.** Chapter assignments are to be completed online within the timeframe stated. Once the due date/time has passed you will not have access to the information. Major written assignments must be turned in by the date and time specified and format specified in the assignment description document. The only exceptions that will be made will be for those excuses that meet the university guidelines (see Missed Test/Exam policy below).

"24" Hour Rule: The instructor will not discuss the grade on an assignment, project, exam, test, etc. during the first 24 hours after it is handed back. Contact the instructor via e-mail the following day to make an appointment to discuss the grade.

Exception: If the problem is a mathematical error follow the instructor to his office after class and the appropriate adjustments will be made.

Exam Deferrals: Legitimate student conflicts are defined as follows: more than one scheduled exam per period; more than two scheduled exams per day; and more than three scheduled exams in any four consecutive periods. A student with a legitimate conflict will receive written notification from the Office of Records and Registration. The instructor involved will also be sent notification of the conflict. Conflicts should be resolved by the student and instructor. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the resolution of any conflicts. **Personal conflicts such as travel plans and work schedules do not warrant a change in examination times.** For further details refer to http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/recandreg/Catalogs/11-12/2011_12_UG_Catalog.pdf

Missed Test/Exam Policy: There are only four acceptable excuses for an individual missing an exam or test. They are:

1. **Illness:** I will need an official certificate from your doctor verifying that you have a medical condition that precluded you from writing the scheduled exam/test. The note must indicate the day(s) you were unable to attend class and not simply the day you were seen by the medical practitioner. You will also be required, within reason, to notify the instructor as early as possible prior to, or immediately after the scheduled date. An email will suffice.
2. **Funeral Attendance:** I will need proof of funeral attendance with the date of the ceremony clearly listed.
3. **Mandatory Courtroom Appearance:** I will need a copy of your official court summons with the date of attendance clearly listed.
4. **Winthrop Athletic Participation and other Approved University Activities:** I will need a signed letter from a member of the senior coaching staff, program director, instructor or other supervisory individuals indicating the day(s) you will be absent.

In all situations, the makeup test/exam will occur within **5** class days of the missed date. In the event of illness will this deadline be **5** days from the **"return to work"** date noted on the medical certificate.

Make-Up or Bonus Work: There will be **NO** make-up work or bonus material of any kind.

Grading Policy

- All grades are based on the sum total of all assignments, tests, exams, etc as specified in the course syllabus.
- Grades will NOT be based on how hard you worked, classroom attendance, classroom participation, the need to graduate by a certain date or the need to maintain a specific GPA for academic scholarships, financial aid, athletic scholarships or athletic eligibility considerations.
- You are responsible for knowing the "drop dates" as indicated in the academic calendar
- I will not drop anyone from the course in order to prevent them receiving a poor grade nor will I provide an incomplete unless extenuating circumstances exist. Students who wish to receive an incomplete as a result of illness will be instructed to seek a medical withdrawal from the class.
- I will not discuss your standing in the course via phone, email or in person with anyone but the student themselves. It is illegal for me to do so unless a release form has been signed with the student and properly registered with Records and Registration. Upon confirmation from Records and Registration, only then will I discuss grades with approved individuals.
- In the interest of fairness, there are no exceptions to these rules.

Grading Breakdown The following letter breakdown will be used for the assignment of final grades:
(Letter Grade/Percentage Value Range)

A	94-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A-	90-93	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

Syllabus Change Policy: The delivery of a course is dynamic in nature and cannot always follow the course calendar and schedule. Wherever possible the instructor will attempt to ensure that the schedule is followed. The following changes can be done without consultation with the class, though any changes will be announced:

1. Changing the sequence/order in which material is delivered
2. Adding or removing content
3. Changing the date of a schedule test or assignment (Exams cannot be changed). At least 1 weeks' notice will be given when changing a test or assignment deadline.

Any changes with regards to the distribution of grades, the application of letter grades, or any changes that effect the assessment and evaluation of student performance will be discussed with the class. If two-thirds of the class is in agreement with a proposed change then the change is accepted. A revised syllabus reflecting that change will be provided electronically to the class.

Course Calendar and Schedule

Week	Date	Topic
1	Aug 21	Maintenance: Course Introduction, Overview and Expectations
	Aug 23	Lecture: Introduction to Geography
2	Aug 28	Lecture: Introducing Latin America
	Aug 30	Lecture: Physical Environment and Environmental Issues
3	Sept 4	Lecture: Physical Environment and Environmental Issues
	Sept 6	Lecture: Historical and Cultural Geography
4	Sept 11	Lecture: Historical and Cultural Geography
	Sept 13	Video: Black in Latin America PBS Video Link
5	Sept 18	Current Event #1 Presentations
	Sept 20	Current Event #1 Presentations Project Proposal Due
6	Sept 25	Current Event #1 Presentations
	Sept 27	Current Event #1 Presentations
7	Oct 02	Midterm Exam
	Oct 04	Lecture: People and Society
8	Oct 09	Lecture: People and Society
	Oct 11	Video: Favela Rising
9	Oct 16	Lecture: Economic Geography of Latin America
	Oct 18	Lecture: Economic Geography of Latin America Withdrawal Deadline
10	Oct 23	Current Event #2 Presentations
	Oct 25	
11	Oct 30	Lecture: Political Geography of Latin America
	Nov 01	
12	Nov 06	Individual Research Presentations
	Nov 08	Individual Research Presentations
13	Nov 13	Individual Research Presentations
	Nov 15	Individual Research Presentations
14	Nov 20	Catch-up day
	Nov 22	Course wrap-up and final exam review
15	Nov 27	Thanksgiving Holiday
	Nov 29	